

The Director

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Executive Registry

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Congress

Washington, D.C. 20505

29 JUN 1977

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Honorable Melvin Price, Chairman
 Committee on Armed Services
 House of Representatives
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter of 18 March 1977 expressing your awareness of some of the problems that the Agency faces in collecting intelligence on illicit narcotics in foreign countries and requesting that I comment on the references to CIA in the Interim Report of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. Our comments are enclosed.

It should be noted that the Interim Report draws only from open testimony of former Director George Bush. When Mr. Bush was invited to testify, it was arranged that, since sensitive Agency activities were involved, he would make a brief statement in open session and then in executive session detail the extent of the Agency's activities; however, the open session lasted for over an hour. Mr. Bush continually stressed that he could not fully respond to questions posed without revealing sensitive information. Unfortunately, the incomplete responses created the mistaken impression that the Agency was not fully carrying out its role in collecting and coordinating intelligence. Agency officials testified in executive session immediately following Mr. Bush's open testimony and detailed the Agency's activities in the narcotics area. We believe this latter testimony clarified this mistaken impression.

To better understand our role, I would be pleased to arrange an executive session briefing detailing our activities for your Committee as we had provided the Select Committee. In closing, may I stress that the Agency is fully aware of the gravity of the narcotics problem in our society. We continually strive to improve our collection techniques; however, our efforts must remain within proper guidelines. We cannot engage in activities which are expressly prohibited by our charter and Presidential directive.

Yours sincerely,

) STANSFIELD TURNER

Enclosure

Agency Comments on References to CIA
In the Interim Report
of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control

The references in the Interim Report concerning CIA and Agency comments are as follows:

References in Interim Report

Page 46 -- "The testimony in open session of Mr. George Bush, Director of the CIA, clearly indicated that there have been and continue to be a number of significant problems characterizing the CIA's involvement in international narcotics intelligence collection, coordination, and dissemination. These problems stem largely from a misunderstanding on the part of Congress, the recipients of CIA intelligence, and the CIA itself as to what exactly the role of the CIA should be in this field. Certainly, under the Reorganization Plan, the CIA has a very important responsibility for intelligence production related to narcotics, but the expectations of those monitoring or receiving this information have differed widely from the CIA's own interpretations of its mandate and operating guidelines."

Page 76 -- (H. INTELLIGENCE - Findings)

"f. There is a large gap between the intelligence needs of the narcotics law enforcement community, and what the CIA feels it is authorized to investigate and provide. DEA was given in Reorganization Plan No. 2 primary responsibility for international as well as domestic intelligence gathering. The situation is worsened by an apparent lack of communication between the enforcement agencies and the CIA; the two groups have failed to clearly delineate their respective needs and limitations. Previous attempts to reconcile differences have failed.

g. A more effective method for transmitting intelligence and determining and executing policy must be developed, in order to avoid delays while information or orders are 'in the pipeline'.

h. There is a dearth of intelligence on international narcotics trafficking and traffickers available to the U.S. narcotics law enforcement community.

i. Events that pose a serious and immediate threat to the national security are, and should be, accorded the full attention of the State Department and the CIA."

Agency Comments

Executive Order 11905 and the Attorney General's implementing guidelines, based on the statutory proscriptions that the CIA has no law enforcement or police powers, delineates the legal restrictions pertaining to the Agency's role in the efforts of the U. S. Government to stop illegal narcotics trafficking into the United States. Also, the White Paper on Drug Abuse (1975) identifies the main categories of intelligence that the Agency collects and disseminates in finished intelligence to our Washington and field consumers. These are to develop strategic foreign intelligence on: major international traffickers; foreign geographical areas where illegal narcotics are grown; major trafficking routes; and information on corruption and compliance by foreign governments whose countries are involved in either production or trafficking of illegal drugs. The Agency also collects information of an operational and tactical nature, of primary interest to the DEA and U.S. Customs. The Central Intelligence Agency has continually worked closely with these agencies to resolve any misunderstandings that may arise as to the Agency's role and to assure that the Agency's agreed-upon responsibilities are being met.

References in Interim Report

Page 76 - (H. INTELLIGENCE - Findings)

"b. The CIA has very rigid channels and procedures for transmitting the intelligence it collects. Information is either forwarded directly to the Justice Department for further dissemination, or it is exchanged only at the executive level with other agencies. There is minimal information exchange or coordination between the CIA and other agencies at the field level. What little exchange occurs, takes place on an informal and uneven basis. The CIA is also cast in the role of simply collecting and providing intelligence to other agencies, and can neither interpret the information, suggest courses of action, determine policy, or take any action. The Select Committee has seen numerous examples of how these two factors have produced a great deal of costly confusion, and there is considerable potential for more of the same."

Page 74 - (G. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION - Recommendations)

"b. There is a lack of information sharing between these Federal agencies resulting in duplication of effort, waste and inefficiency. For example, when Customs Service passes names of arrested smugglers of narcotics to DEA, Customs does not learn what happens to those cases. The CIA, which collects foreign intelligence on narcotics traffickers, does not know what happens to the information it passes on. Computers and other technology are not geared to cooperative intelligence between the agencies."

Page 64 - (C. FEDERAL AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS - Findings)

"f. The CIA does not undertake to follow up on, or assess the value of the intelligence it transmits to other agencies."

Page 68 - (E. EVALUATION - Findings)

"a. No systematic evaluation process exists to assess the CIA's performance in international narcotics intelligence collection. However, the Agency must be accountable to some standard. Unless the CIA assumes the responsibility of self-evaluation, one must turn to the agencies receiving intelligence for an appraisal."

Agency Comments

To ensure that our targeting zeros in on information of interest to the DEA and U. S. Customs, we coordinate closely with DEA both in the field and at Headquarters and are continually in contact at the highest levels to ensure that our cooperation and coordination are maintained as fully as possible. Mr. Peter Bensinger, Administrator of DEA, as well as other officials of DEA, recognize our constraints and we are constantly working together to resolve mutual problems. Our Agency currently is preparing a joint statement with DEA to establish operational guidelines designed to further improve the exchange of information, operational planning and collection procedures. As an indication of the closeness with which we work together with DEA in the field, in March of this year a two-day operational conference was held in a country in Southeast Asia and field representatives from both our organizations in Southeast Asia attended. Information on current operations conducted against international traffickers was shared and ways and means discussed on how the overall U. S. Government's anti-narcotics program in Southeast Asia could be improved.

The Agency has a special unit within the Directorate of Operations comprised of expert professionals to handle narcotics-related matters and to coordinate closely with DEA and other agencies of interest. Further, the Directorate of Intelligence prepares periodic analytic reports and assessments on the subject as well as a bimonthly publication on the international narcotics situation which are disseminated to these agencies. Copies of recent classified reports prepared by the Agency are being provided under separate cover.

CIA does not formally follow up on its reporting to determine what action, if any, ultimate consumers take concerning the information provided. To do so would involve the Agency in policy decisions which is contrary to the Agency's basic mission. We are collectors, analyzers and providers of information to those who must make policy and direct Executive actions. We do follow up, however, with our consumers to assure that the information we provide meets their requirements and allows sound decisions based on the most accurate data available. Mr. Bush, in his testimony before the Select Committee, repeatedly explained that if there are inadequacies in the information we provide, the receiving agencies should make this known and indeed he emphasized that, in his several meetings with Mr. Bensinger, the latter at no time indicated that the Agency was failing to meet its commitments to DEA under the guidelines established.

References in Interim Report

Page 47 -- "In the hearings Chairman Wolff expressed some concern over what he felt was a low priority for the narcotics effort in the CIA's overall activities."

Page 62 - (B. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES - Conclusions)

"g. It may be unrealistic to expect that, given such a mandate, State and CIA should hold narcotics intelligence collection as a high priority and devote to it all the resources that other agencies consider desirable."

Agency Comment

The Agency's collection efforts against specified targets is given the highest priority in the field and this is clearly understood by all Agency personnel engaged in or supporting these efforts. The intelligence collected is appropriately disseminated to our Washington and field customers. Former Director Bush during his testimony emphasized that narcotics intelligence collection is handled on a priority basis and not routinely.

References in Interim Report

Page 76 - (H. INTELLIGENCE - Findings)

"d. By the very nature of the established chain of command, an executive-level decision must be made on each significant piece of intelligence before it can be acted upon. By the time directives come back to the field offices of the CIA or enforcement agency, it is often too late for them to be of any use. Certainly the CIA ought to take adequate precautions to protect the security of the intelligence it transmits, but one must ask how many of the current procedures are followed as established routine rather than real need."

Agency Comment

The channels and procedures which the Agency maintains in the dissemination of raw intelligence information from the field on this subject are needed to assure the protection of the foreign intelligence sources and methods involved. Established strict requirements for source protection dictate the manner of handling and not routine procedures. Such protection is required under the statutory responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence to protect such information. The exposure of sources could jeopardize the basic mission of the Agency since in many instances they provide highly important foreign intelligence not related to narcotics matters. Accordingly, within the strict caveat of source protection, we cooperate to the fullest extent possible with other agencies and make every effort to provide information on a timely basis.

Approved For Release 2004/03/16 : CIA-RDP80M00165A001800020003-1

April 15, 1977

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Narcotics Assessments on Selected Countries

The attached current assessments of the narcotics situation in selected countries were prepared for general background information by analysts in the Central Intelligence Agency.

The assessments were prepared in draft in early February 1977 and reflect data that was available to the analysts prior to February 15, 1977.

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ASSESSMENT OF NARCOTICS SITUATION

IN

SELECTED COUNTRIES

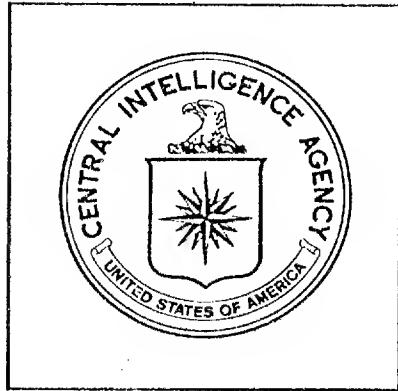
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Middle East-South Asia
Europe
Southeast Asia

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International Narcotics STAFF NOTES

Secret 193

PS SNIN 77-008
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Remarks:

ER has no record of the Interim Report of the Select Committee. Prepare DCI response.

D/Executive Secretary
22 MAR 77

Date

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JOHN J. FORD, STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Washington, D.C. 20515

NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

MELVIN PRICE, CHAIRMAN

March 18, 1977

Senate Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control Registry

70-3836

OLC #77-1097

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

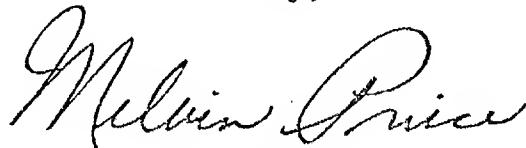
We have reviewed the Interim Report of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, with particular attention to the section on the Central Intelligence Agency.

We are aware of some of the problems that arise for the Agency in connection with gathering intelligence on, and particularly investigating matters associated with, illicit narcotics activity in foreign countries. Also, we are mindful of your statutory responsibilities in connection with intelligence sources and methods.

With that in mind, we would appreciate having your views on the comments contained in the Narcotics Committee report with regard to the Central Intelligence Agency.

With best regards,

Sincerely,



Melvin Price
Chairman

MP:wha

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NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

MELVIN PRICE, CHAIRMAN

March 18, 1977

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Admiral Stansfield Turner
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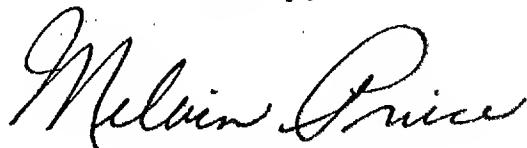
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